

Address to the European Parliament

At Strasbourg

25 April 2007

Dynamics of Unity of Nations

**“Confluence of civilizations
is definitely possible”**

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am delighted to be with the Honourable Members of European Parliament on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee year of the European Union. When I am with you friends, I was thinking, what thoughts I can share with you. India as a democratic nation has the experience of providing leadership to over one billion people with multi-language, multi-culture and multi-religious systems. I wish to share this experience with you.

European Union for peace and prosperity

European civilization has a unique place in human history. Its people were valiantly engaged in the adventure of exploring the planet earth resulting in the discovery of many ideas and systems. Europe has seen the birth of pioneers in science leading to technologies. Europe was the theatre of conflicts for hundreds of years among and between the nations including the two world wars. Now with this backdrop and dynamics, you have established European Union with a vision for peace and prosperity for the entire region. European Union has become an example for connectivity among nations, probably with no possibility of war, leading to lasting regional peace.

Inter-connectedness

Before I started out on my journey to Europe, I was thinking, why are Europe and India unique and natural partners? Do we share a common history and heritage, possibly in future, a common destiny? What I found was astonishing: the depth and vitality of our inter-connectedness, by language, by culture, by ancient beliefs, ideologies and the movement of people have stood the test of time. This has matured into a very strong bond through a sustained trade and intellectually satisfying collaboration in many areas of science and technology.

Unity in Diversity

India is a country which has over the years learnt to evolve and maintain a unique unity amongst diversity. Similarly, the greatest contribution of European Union is that, you have demonstrated to the world, that it is possible to build a strong union of nations without compromising national identities. It has become an inspirational model and an example to emulate for every region in the world. The European Union and India support a social form of economic development and encourage a model of growth with equity. Both are conscious of the need for growth to respect the environment and make it sustainable for future generations. With this valuable experience of centuries behind India and European Union, we can bring together a doctrine of global cooperation built over the foundation of

regional collaborations and core competencies of nations.

European Union and India radiate a message to the world that regional cooperation and inter-regional collaboration will lead to a win-win situation for all, so that we can have a politically and socio-economically emergent civilization. Our contribution will be judged if we could, before the 21st century is over, make all regions transform into happy unions leading to the emergence of world of unions. In this context, I am reminded of the dream of the Indian poet கனியன் பூங்குன்றனார் who articulated 3000 years back in the Tamil classic:

புற நானாறு; யாதும் ஊரே; யாவரும் கேளிர்;
which means "I am a world citizen, Every citizen is my own kith and kin"

With this background, I have brought from India, a message, a message to start three important Indo-European missions which can contribute to global peace and prosperity. These missions, I am putting forth based on India's experience and the dynamics of European Union.

1. **Evolution of enlightened society** – for evolving a citizen with value system and leading to prosperous and peaceful world.
2. **Leading to Energy Independence** – A three dimensional approach for energy choice towards realizing clean planet earth.
3. **World Knowledge Platform** – for synergizing the core competence of European Union and India in certain areas for providing solutions to critical issues like water, healthcare and capacity building.

Towards a cohesive society

When nations join together to build a cohesive society, it is necessary to ensure that benefits of development encompass all sections of the society. World over, poverty, illiteracy, un-employment and deprivation are driving forward the forces of anger and violence. These forces link themselves to some earlier real or perceived historical enmities, tyrannies injustice, inequities, ethnic issues and religious fundamentalism flowing into an outburst of extremism worldwide. Both India and European Union have witnessed and are witnessing the unsavory acts of certain misguided sections of society. We have to jointly address ourselves to the root causes of such phenomena for finding lasting solutions for promoting peace.

Righteousness is the beginning:

What we need is a carrier of eternal goodness and wholesomeness in human conduct, which is "Righteousness".

As we say in India:

Righteousness

Where there is righteousness in the heart
There is beauty in the character.
When there is beauty in the character,
There is harmony in the home.
When there is harmony in the home,
There is an order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation,
There is peace in the world.

This is true, for the whole world. When we need peace in the world,

we need order in the nation; we need harmony in the home, whether in Europe or in India or in any part of the world, the origin is righteousness in the heart. How do we evolve righteousness, in the hearts of every citizen of the world?

I. Evolution of Enlightened Society

With this spirit of righteousness in the heart, dear Honorable Members, I would like to put forth to this important gathering, a methodology for evolving a happy, prosperous and peaceful society in our planet, which I call as “Evolution of Enlightened society”. I have shared these thoughts with many intellectuals in national and international spheres.

How do we create such an enlightened society, which will have three components (a) Education with value system (b) Religion transforming into spirituality and (c) Economic development for societal transformation. Let us discuss.

a. Education with value system:

We have seen that the seeds of peace in the world have their origin in the righteousness in the heart of every individual. Such righteous citizens lead to the evolution of enlightened society. Education with value system has to be so designed that the righteousness in the heart is developed in young minds. That should be the mission of education. The prime learning environment is five to seventeen years of age. This reminds me of an ancient Greek teacher's saying, *"Give me a child for seven years; afterwards, let God or devil take the child. They cannot change the child"*. This indicates the power of great teachers and what they can inculcate in the young minds. Parents and teachers must inculcate moral leadership amongst children. It requires the ability to have insights into the uniqueness and universality of human consciousness. True education is the acquisition of enlightened feelings and enlightened powers to understand daily events and to understand the permanent truth linking man, to his environment, human and planetary.

While I was in college, I remember the lectures given by the highest authority of a Jesuit institution Rev Father Rector Kalathil of St. Joshep's college, Tiruchirappalli, Southern India. Every week on Monday, he will take a class for an hour. He used to talk about good human beings present and past and what makes a good human being. In this class he used to give lectures on personalities such as Buddha, Confucius, St. Augustine, Califa Omar, Mahatma Gandhi, Einstein, Abraham Lincoln and moral stories linked to our civilizational heritage. In the moral science class, Father Kalathil used to highlight the best aspect of, how the great personalities have been evolved as good human beings through parental care, teaching and companionship of great books. Even though these lessons were given to me in 1950's during my college days, they inspire me even today. It is essential that in the schools and colleges, lectures are given by great teachers of the institution once in a week for one hour on civilizational heritage and derived value system. This may be called as Moral Science Class that will elevate the young minds to love the country, to love the other human beings and elevate them to higher planes. I have suggested this methodology to educationists in my country. European Union may like to consider evolving a system that would enable a student to imbibe these fundamental traits for the benefit of all.

Now, let me take up the area that is transforming religion into spiritual force. Many in the world believe, it is a difficult mission. I would like to share an experience that I have witnessed which has convinced me that it is possible.

b. Religion Transforming into Spirituality: Universal Mind

Religion has two components, theology and spirituality. Even though theology is unique to every religion, the spiritual component spreads the value to be inculcated by human beings for promoting a good human life and welfare of the society, while pursuing the material life. I would like to share an experience how the religion and science came together in a big mission.

It was during early 1960's, the founder of Indian Space Research Programme Prof. Vikram Sarabhai with his team, had located a place technically most suited for space research after considering many alternatives. The place called Thumba in Kerala, was selected for space research as it was near the magnetic equator, ideally suited for ionospheric and electrojet research in upper atmosphere. I was fortunate to work with Prof Vikram Sarabhai for about eight years.

The major challenge for Prof Vikram Sarabhai was to get the place in a specific area. As was normal, Prof. Vikram Sarabhai approached the Kerala Government administrators first. After seeing the profile of the land and the sea coast, the view expressed was that, thousands of fishing folks lived there, the place had an ancient St Mary Magdalene Church, Bishop's House and a school. Hence it would be very difficult to give this land and they were willing to provide land in an alternative area. Similarly the political system also opined that it would be a difficult situation due to the existence of important institutions and the concern for people who were to be relocated. However there was a suggestion to approach the only person who could advise and help. That was the Bishop "Rev Father Peter Bernard Pereira". Prof Vikram Sarabhai, approached the Bishop on a Saturday evening, I still remember. The meeting between the two turned out to be historical. Many of us witnessed the event. Rev Father exclaimed, "Oh Vikram, you are asking my children's abode, my abode and God's abode. How is it possible?" Both had a unique quality that they could smile even in difficult situations. Rev Father Peter Bernard Pereira asked Prof. Vikram Sarabhai to come to church on Sunday morning at 9.00 AM. Prof. Vikram Sarabhai went to the church again on Sunday with his team. At that time the prayer was progressing with the recitation of Bible by Father Pereira.

After the prayer was over, the Bishop invited Prof. Vikram Sarabhai to come to the dais. The Rev Father introduced Prof Vikram Sarabhai to the mass, "Dear children, here is a scientist, Prof. Vikram Sarabhai. What do sciences do? All of us experience, including this church, the light from electricity. I am able to talk to you through the mike which is made possible by technology. The treatment to patients by doctors comes from medical sciences. Science through technology enhances the comfort and quality of human life. What do, I do, as a preacher? I pray for you, for your well being, for your peace. In short, what Vikram is doing and what I am doing, are the same - both science and spirituality seek the Almighty's blessings for human prosperity in body and mind. Dear Children, Prof Vikram says, he would build within a year, near the sea-coast, alternative facilities to what we are having. Now dear children, can we give our abode, can we give my abode, can we give the God's abode for a great scientific mission?" There was a total silence, a pin drop silence. Then all of them got up and said '**Amen**' which made the whole church reverberate.

That was the church where we had our design centre, where we started rocket assembly and the Bishop's house was our scientists' working place. Later the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS) led to the establishment of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and the space activities transformed into multiple space centers throughout the country. Now this church has become an important centre of learning, where thousands of people learn about the dynamic history of the space programme of India and the great minds of a scientist and spiritual leader. Of course, the Thumba citizens got the well equipped facilities, worshiping place and educational centre in an alternate place at the right time.

When I think of this event, I can see how enlightened spiritual and

scientific leaders can converge towards giving reverence to the human life.

Of course the birth of TERLS and then VSSC gave the country the capability for launch vehicles, spacecraft and space applications that have accelerated social and economic development in India to unprecedented levels.

Today, among us, Prof Vikram Sarabhai is not there, Rev Peter Bernard Pereira is not there, but those who are responsible for creation and making flowers blossom will themselves be a different kind of flower as described in the Bhagwat Gita: "See the flower, how generously it distributes perfume and honey. It gives to all, gives freely of its love. When its work is done, it falls away quietly. Try to be like the flower, unassuming despite all its qualities". What a beautiful message, to the humanity on the purpose of life reflected the spiritual component. Can we bridge the spiritual component of the religions to bring peace to nations and to the world?

I would like to recall one incident which commonly occurs in many parts of my country. I have witnessed this event when I was a young boy (10 yrs). In our house, periodically I used to see three different unique personalities meet. Pakshi Lakshmana Shastri, who was the head priest of the famous Rameshwaram temple and a vedic scholar, Rev Father Bodal, who built the first church in Rameshwaram Island and my father who was an Imam in the mosque. All three of them used to sit and discuss the islands problems and find solutions. In addition they built several religious connectivities with compassion. These connectivities quietly spread to others in the island like the fragrance from the flowers. This sight always comes to my mind whenever, I discuss with people on Dialogue of religions. India has had this advantage of integration of minds for thousands of years. Throughout the world, the need to have a frank dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations has been felt now more than ever.

These two instances, what I have narrated give me confidence that religions definitely can be bridged through spiritual components. Whenever I meet the young and experienced in my country. I have narrated these two experiences. Many in my country and world over may have such experiences. We have to spread such **"Glad Tidings"** to every part of the world.

Now let us discuss the third important component of enlightened society which is to achieve economic development for societal transformation. Let me take my country India as an example, it may be true to many parts of the world.

c. Economic development for societal transformation.

Indian Economy is in an ascent phase. There is considerable growth in the manufacturing and service sectors. We have a mission of spreading this economic growth throughout the country including the rural sector. Nearly 220 million people have to be lifted by upgrading their quality of life in both rural and urban areas. Even though the GDP growth indicates our economic growth, people's participation is essential for achieving the required targets. It is essential to ensure that the citizens are empowered with good quality of life encompassing nutritious food, good habitat, clean environment, affordable healthcare, quality education and productive employment, integrated with our value system drawn from civilizational heritage leading to the comprehensive development of the nation that will bring smiles in one billion people. These are indicators for the growth of the National Prosperity Index. To achieve that growth rate, we have identified five areas where India has a core competence for integrated action: (1) Agriculture and food processing (2) Education and Healthcare (3) Information and Communication Technology (4) Infrastructure development such as power, transportation, and communication, including Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) and (5) Self reliance in critical technologies. We propose to realize the vision of transforming India into a developed nation

before 2020 by energizing and igniting the minds of all the 540 million youth of the nation.

So far we have discussed the three dimensional approach of providing value based education, religion transforming into spiritual force and economic development for societal transformation leading to the evolution of an enlightened society. This integrated three dimensional methodology of evolution of enlightened society, will pave the way for peaceful, prosperous, happy nations and thereby a world, free from extremisms and further seeds of extremism. In my website www.presidentofindia.nic.in, I have given how an empowered world body is essential to evolve the nations of enlightened citizens. I will be very happy to exchange thoughts and ideas and action related to this mission with the Honorable members of European Parliament.

Let me now discuss the second mission “*Leading to Energy Independence*”.

II. Leading to Energy Independence

When we analyze the critical problems facing the planet earth today, two important issues come to our minds. First one is the continuous depletion of fossil-material-derived, oil, gas and coal reserves as predicted by World Energy Forum. The second one is the continuous degradation of environment primarily due to extensive use of fossil materials for generating energy. The solution to these problems can be found through energy independence, which I have presented to my country. It may be applicable to many nations.

Energy Independence in India - A Perspective: India has 17% of the world’s population, but only about 0.8% of the world’s known oil and natural gas resources. Based on the progress visualized for the nation during the next two decades, the power generating capacity has to increase to 400,000 MW by the year 2030 from the current 130,000 MW in India. This takes into consideration of energy economies planned and the design and production of energy efficient equipments and systems. Energy independence has got to be achieved through three different sources namely renewable energy (solar, wind and hydro power), electrical power from nuclear energy and bio-fuel for the transportation sector. Energy independence throws very important technological challenges to the world: The solar cell efficiency has to increase from the present 20% to 55% through intensified research on CNT (Carbon Nano Tube) based solar cells. For thorium reactors, as it is known, thorium is a non-fissile material. It has to be converted into a fissile material using Fast Breeder Technology. In the Bio-fuel area, the challenge is bio-fuel plantation for higher yield, esterification technologies for the higher output and the modification to automobile power plants. These three research areas definitely need intensive cooperation between European Union and India. I would suggest setting up of an “Indo-EU Renewable Energy Development programme” for taking up advanced R&D in all forms of renewable energy leading to the availability of commercial class large scale power plants within the next decade.

Let us now discuss the third mission, called “World Knowledge Platform”.

III. World Knowledge Platform

With the Indian experiences of two successful international cooperative ventures from concept to realization and marketing, I would suggest evolution of “World Knowledge Platform” for bringing together the core competence of multiple nations of EU and India in science and technology leading to the development of unique systems for Global applications. “World Knowledge platform” will enable joint design,

development, cost effective production and marketing of the knowledge products, systems and services in various domains based on the core competence of partner nations to international market. World knowledge platform is a meeting place for science, technology, industry, management and marketing.

Missions of World Knowledge Platform: The convergence of Bio, Nano and IT is expected to touch every area of concern to the humanity. The “World Knowledge Platform” will take up the missions, in some of the areas discussed further, which are of utmost urgency to all of us to make our world a safe, sustainable, peaceful and prosperous place to live:

1. **Water:** Desalination of sea water using solar energy, channelization, networking of rivers, cost effective safe drinking water.
2. **Healthcare:** Diagnosis, drug delivery system, development and production of vaccines for HIV/TB, malaria and cardiac diseases, detection and cure of diabetics.
3. **Agriculture and Food processing:** Increased production of food grain in an environment of reduced land, reduced water and reduced manpower; preservation of food; food processing; cost effective storage and distribution.
4. **Knowledge products:** Hardware, Software and Networking and Storage Products including handheld micro and nano electronic devices.
5. **Transportation systems:** Fossil fuel free transportation systems using renewable energies safety systems, hardware and embedded software integration.
6. **Habitat:** Energy efficient, water efficient, pollution free habitat.
7. **Disaster Prediction and Management:** Earthquake forecasting, assessing in advance the quantum of rain for particular cloud condition.
8. **Capacity Building:** Quality human resource development for all the above areas including the development of personnel with world class skills.

European Union represents a wealth of scientific potential with rich culture for research. India has emerged as a leading country with its demonstrated scientific and technological potential in many societal missions and is now in the growth path. Combined strengths of the nations can be utilized for the mutual advantage of both India and EU by joining together as partners in creating the world knowledge platform.

Conclusion

Honorable Members of European Parliament, as we have seen, there is a visible common thread of our dreams and problems. When I am with you, I have a feeling; that there are beautiful solutions from beautiful minds. Beautiful minds generate creativity. This is the common heritage of both India and Europe. Dear Honourable Members of European Union, I have presented three missions: (a) Evolution of enlightened society, (b) Leading to Energy Independence (c) Creating World Knowledge Platform. These Indo-EU missions will definitely reinforce further our strategic partnership and become the foundation for making the change in the life of 1.5 billion people, ultimately leading to confluence of civilizations.

For meeting the challenges of these missions, we can draw the inspiration from the saying of Maharishi Patanjali, about 2,500 years ago *"When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bounds. Your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties and talents come alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamt yourself to be."*

Dear friends, Let me convey my greetings of one billion people of my country to all the Hon'ble Members of European Union and through you to all the citizens of European Union countries.

May God bless you.

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

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